



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument

190 E Center Street  
Kanab, UT 84741  
<http://www.ut.blm.gov/monument>



In Reply Refer To:  
6710(UT-030)

December 8, 2004

Parties interested in the Buckskin Mountains,

The Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument has recently completed a Landscape Assessment of the Buckskin Mountain portion of the Monument to evaluate current conditions of vegetation communities and wildlife habitat; develop desired future conditions; and to make recommendations for possible future management actions within the area. The Buckskin Mountains are located approximately 25 miles east of Kanab, between US Highway 89 and the Utah/Arizona Border. It is the northern-most portion of the Kaibab Plateau and important winter habitat for both the Pansagaunt and Kaibab mule deer herds. It is also an existing fuelwood area on the Monument.

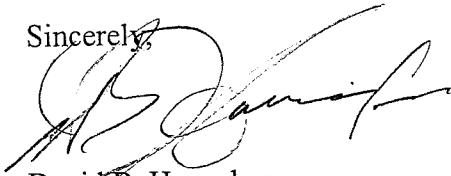
The purpose of a Landscape Assessment is to (1) describe the existing condition of the area; (2) describe the desired condition of the area; (3) describe the need for change (difference between the existing condition and desired condition); and (4) describe possible management practices to reach that change. Possible management practices will then be selected to move forward in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process to implement on the ground. A Landscape Assessment is NOT a decision document. The Landscape Assessment contains only background information for possible decision documents to reference. The primary purpose for any future management actions that may take place in the area would be to improve wildlife habitat conditions and to improve the ability of the Monument to protect resources within the Buckskin Mountain portion of the Monument.

General observations from field collection trips would describe the area as highly disturbed. The characteristics of the vegetation have been influenced by woodcutting, off-road travel, ungulate grazing (cattle, mule deer, and elk), drought, wildfire and fire suppression. Issues that have been identified by the team include: limited young shrub (browse) plants which are important food for wildlife; winter forage (grasses and forbs) availability; decadent and dead sagebrush stands; maintaining mule deer migration travel corridors; maintain critical mule deer winter habitat; vehicle-mule deer collision areas on Highway 89; water availability; availability of seed food sources for migratory bird and rodent populations; native vegetation composition may be altered; presence of non-native and invasive vegetation; off road vehicle travel; soil erosion, compaction, and amount of bare ground; recognizable fuelwood area boundaries; and availability of fuelwood for local communities.

The Monument is looking for input from interested parties on potential future management activities in the Buckskin Mountains. Analysis of possible management actions will begin this winter, and it is hoped that some project activities would be implemented in Fall 2005. If you have information or interest in the area, or concerns about possible management actions within the Buckskin Mountains, please contact Missy Siders at the Monument office (435-644-4338 or email at [Melissa.Siders@blm.gov](mailto:Melissa.Siders@blm.gov)).

A copy of the Buckskin Mountain Landscape Assessment can be obtained from the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument web site (<http://www.ut.blm.gov/monument>) under the "What's New" heading. If you do not have access to internet access, you may request a copy of the assessment by contacting Missy Siders at the Monument office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Hunsaker", written over a horizontal line.

David B. Hunsaker  
Monument Manager